

## **Commemoration of the Reformation 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: 1517 – 2017**

I begin with a reminder of some of the objectives of the Association of Dundas Churches.

Article 2.d To encourage inter-church activity and fellowship as a witness to the community.

Article 2.g To provide programmes of mutual interest to the Christian community at large.

Article 2.h To maintain interest in ecumenical concerns by bringing the news and views of the churches in Dundas to the attention of the entire membership of congregations.

The Association of Dundas Churches is an ecumenical body that is one expression of the desire for Christian unity. It provides a place for fellowship, learning, joint witness, and joint action on social issues all in the name of Jesus Christ.

We seldom speak of our place in the worldwide ecumenical movement, but we do have one! One of the ways this is evident is in our observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity which is shaped jointly by the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

In my own ministry I am aware that anniversaries are “thinking places” and “thanking places.” Anniversaries offer opportunity for reflection, for looking back and looking ahead. They offer opportunity to deepen understanding of all that has been in order to both lay down and to take up.

It seems to me that some sort of commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation has potential to be significant for us as a witness of our desire for Christian unity, as a programme of mutual interest, and as an ecumenical event. I don't have a fixed idea of what this might be, but think it is an opportunity for something either through the Association or, I suppose, through the Dundas Ministerial.

In January 2016 I took part in the Symposium on Worship and the Arts at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. I participated in a seminar entitled “Preparing to Remember the Reformation.” There was a panel of people giving presentations from both Catholic and Protestant perspectives (with an eye to the Orthodox as well). Panelists had backgrounds in liturgy, history, music and general congregational life.

Principally what I took from that is that we in the ADC are already living ecumenism in that we worship, pray, study and serve together. Ours is a happy story that a commemoration of the

Reformation might set in context. It also might deepen appreciation of what we are all about and how significant our life is!

One panelist framed commemoration possibilities as follows:

1. Some scholarly advance – some educational work or event ...  
I wonder if there is a local Dundas story to be told about church cooperation ... even our own ADC story.
2. Some awareness of how the spirit of that time lives in us now ... how it has shaped us  
What tenets of the Reformation are still held dear ... and still shape our living
3. Some mementoes of the anniversary (as in the Luther trips, etc)
4. Engaging in some ecumenical advance – establishing greater awareness of what has been achieved especially since Vatican 2 – these past 50+ years.

Again, it strikes me that there might be an opportunity here for at least one activity/commemoration.

We might offer a panel discussion some evening or afternoon.

We might offer a joint worship both giving thanks and lamenting

We might use it as an occasion to write an ADC history

We might celebrate the ecumenism of the past 50 years, the various ways unity is promoted.

We might launch a new ecumenical vision in Dundas ... around re-missioning/sharing buildings

We might think about “catholicity” – if we hold unity dear and if so how we understand it

The idea of some sort of commemoration met with favourable response from some of us at the last ADC meeting and the last Ministerial gathering. Our ADC meeting will see if there is energy to pursue something either through the ADC or through the Ministerial.

Rick